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## The Portrait of a Roman: Marcus Porcius Cato

By JOSEPH M. COSTELLOE, S.J.

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Of the three things which Cato regretted during the course of his life, the first was that he once told a secret to his wife; the second, that he once sailed to a place to which he could have walked; and the third, that for one day he had been intestate.<sup>1</sup> Parsimonious, a lover of the land rather than the sea, a kind but stern head of his family, Marcus Porcius Cato embodied all that was great and mean in the Roman temperament before it was chastened by contact with the Greeks. He was a Roman of the Romans, and, in the words of a modern critic, "Caton représente bien le caractère des vieux Romains, avarès, austères, durs à eux-mêmes et aux autres, mais actifs, énergiques et pratiques."<sup>2</sup>

Among three generations of great men Cato stands out as a conspicuous figure in Roman politics. A paragon of primitive Roman simplicity and the last of the "old Romans," he is one of the most picturesque characters in Roman history and one whom later generations never ceased to point out as a hero and a sage. Poets, orators, scientists, historians, and educators—all found something to admire in him. To Virgil he is *magnus Cato*,<sup>3</sup> who finds his natural rest giving laws to the pious souls in the nether world.<sup>4</sup> Horace could look back with regret to the more austere days when *intonsus Cato* was checking the excesses of Roman luxury.<sup>5</sup> To the elder Pliny Cato was *optimus orator, optimus imperator, optimus senator*, excelling in the three high fields of human endeavor.<sup>6</sup> Hardly of less moment was the esteem of Quintilian for the old Roman: *M. igitur Cato idem summus imperator, idem sapiens, idem orator, idem historiae conditor, idem iuris, idem rerum rusticarum peritissimus fuit*.<sup>7</sup> Cicero made Cato the chief speaker in his charming dialogue *Cato Maior de Senectute*, and in his speeches and essays never ceased chanting the praises of him who was *optimus imperator*,<sup>8</sup> *gravissimus auctor*,<sup>9</sup> *in omni virtute princeps*,<sup>10</sup> *Marcus Porcius Cato*.

Such generous encomia, even from the habitually rhetorical Latin authors, might indicate that Cato was a truly great man—a genius in the rank of Alexander, or Pyrrhus, or Caesar; but he was not such a man at all. In fact, as a general Cato cannot be compared with Scipio Africanus, much less with another contemporary, Hannibal. As a statesman, Cato's contributions to Roman politics were mostly negative; and to judge from the few extant fragments of his speeches, we must admit that his success as an orator must have been due more to native wit than art or elegance. His greatness lies in the fact that for years as a leader

of the conservative elements in Rome he fought against a Hellenism that all too rapidly was breaking down the simplicity and integrity of Roman life.

### The Young Cato: Soldier and Advocate

Marcus Porcius was born on a Sabine farm in Tusculum about ten miles southeast of Rome. To the family name of Porcius the surname *Cato* was added in later life in recognition of his great abilities.<sup>11</sup> His family was not of noble birth, although, *haud sane detractor laudum suarum*,<sup>12</sup> he did not fail to boast of the fact that his grandfather had often won prizes for valor. Since he was born in the year 234 B.C., his boyhood was spent in the interval between the First and Second Punic Wars. With keen grey eyes and reddish hair that gave a certain 'barbaric' cast to his features, the young Cato grew up amidst the hard toil on his father's farm. As long as he lived he never lost his first attachment for country life. There were other and easier ways of making money—trade, for example, and money lending—but none were so honorable as farming. To Cato as to all the early Romans, to be called 'a good farmer' was the highest praise that could be bestowed on any man. And besides, *ex agricolis et viri fortissimi et milites strenuissimi gignuntur*.<sup>13</sup>

The ideal to which Cato set himself as a youth was at first a narrow one: the development of his body by hard toil to make it fit for soldierly combat, and the development of his 'second body,' his ready tongue. The morning sun would find him, stripped to the waist, working with his servants in the field and sharing in their frugal fare. But often enough he was to be found in the market places and villages about Rome, taking free of charge any case at law that was offered to him and pleading it before the magistrates. For his evening recreation he could frequently be seen walking to the humble cottage that had once been owned by Manius Curius, a hero of three triumphs, and the man who had driven Pyrrhus out of Italy. Drawing inspiration from this rude hut, Cato would return to his own home more determined than ever to "increase the labors of his hands and lop off his extravagancies."<sup>14</sup>

The severe regimen to which Cato had set himself was not without its fruits. When scarcely more than a youth, he could boast of the many wounds on his chest received in fighting for his country. The first campaign in which he was engaged took place when he was but seventeen.<sup>15</sup> Within the next decade he was to see service in many of the critical battles of the Second Punic War—the siege of Capua in 212 B.C.,<sup>16</sup> the capture of Tarentum three years later,<sup>17</sup> and the defeat of Hasdrubal at the Metaurus River in 207 B.C.<sup>18</sup>

In the meantime, the industry and courage of the young farmer could hardly escape the notice of influen-

tial men at Rome. Valerius Flaccus, who owned a farm in Tusculum adjoining that of Cato, had observed his pedestrian journeys to the local courts and his hardy manner of life. Rome, torn by the ravages of the war, needed more than ever men of principle to direct the policy of the government. Valerius urged Cato to take up a public life at Rome. Just when Cato was finally persuaded to transfer his residence to the city is not definitely known. But the move launched him on a brilliant career which was to culminate in his sharing the consulate and censorship with his first patron, Valerius Maximus.

#### *The Rising Politician*

On coming to Rome it was but natural that Cato should attach himself to the older and more conservative party of Quintus Fabius Maximus rather than the newer elements rising up under the guidance of Publius Scipio. In Campania Cato had seen action under the now famous Cunctator. Through the influence of his friends in Rome and as a reward of his own outstanding merits, Cato was promoted to the military tribuneship under Marcellus in Sicily.<sup>19</sup> There he must have been popular with the rank and file, for "in battle he showed himself effective of hand, sure and steadfast of foot, and of a fierce countenance. With threatening speech and harsh cries he would advance upon the foe, for he rightly thought, and tried to show others, that often such action terrifies the enemy more than the sword."<sup>20</sup> He carried his own armor on the march, would have but one attendant, whom he treated kindly, and drank only water except when a raging thirst or faintness would induce him to take a little vinegar or wine.<sup>21</sup>

Frugality which was likely to arouse the esteem of the legionaries was hardly to be put down as a virtue by fellow officers, and least of all by the leading patrician of the day, Publius Scipio. In a series of brilliant campaigns in Spain Scipio had won the admiration and devotion of his soldiers by his sudden intuitions, his tactical genius, and his magnificence. It was an odd stroke of fortune which brought about Cato's appointment as quaestor of Scipio's army for the expedition into Africa in 204 B.C. The close proximity of two such diametrically opposed temperaments was bound to break out into open conflicts. A feud was started between the two which reached its climax years later when Cato forced the great Publius Scipio Africanus to withdraw into private life.

Cato was allied with the forces in Rome which had charged Scipio with excessive cruelty in his campaigns in southern Italy. Now that he was working with him in Africa, the thrifty young quaestor became alarmed at the largess with which Scipio was accustomed to treat his soldiers. The excessive wages were being spent on wanton pleasures and, to Cato's mind, causing a breakdown in the morale of the troops. Another source of vexation was Scipio's addiction to the Greek innovations of theatre and palaestra. From this time on Cato was to take his stand as the enemy of Greek customs, a man austere and incorruptible.<sup>22</sup>

Cato returned to Rome, either because he was sent there by Scipio who did not care to have such an exact-

ing procurator in his retinue, or, more likely, he went to the capital of his own accord to bring charges against his superior officer.<sup>23</sup> Scipio maintained that he had to give an account of his actions and not of his finances and successfully defended himself, but the struggle had shown that *rigidus Cato* was a man to be reckoned with. To the younger set of Romans, many of whom were older than the rising plebeian, Cato must have appeared as something of a problem. *Quod tibi deerit, a te ipso mutuare* was one of Cato's sayings.<sup>25</sup> And without the usual accouterments of a successful career—wealth, family, and a higher education—Cato had 'borrowed' enough from his own talents to make for himself a name at Rome. Atavistic, boastful, a politician without respect of persons, he had already acquired the reputation of 'the Roman Demosthenes,'<sup>26</sup> and with this reputation he had gained not a little of the power and prestige of a shrewd and witty statesman.

In 199 B.C. Cato was elected plebeian aedile, and the following year praetor and given Sardinia as his province. Each office he fulfilled with his customary rigor and severity, and, we might add, financial perfection. As aedile he took personal charge of the public baths to see if the temperature of the water was correct.<sup>27</sup> As praetor representing the powerful Roman Republic he traveled with a retinue of but one servant. His rule, though exact, was a relief to the natives, who had already at this early date experienced some of the financial hardships of Roman 'protection.'

(To be continued)

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *Cato* 9, 6.

<sup>2</sup> L. Laurand, *Manuel des Études Grecques et Latines*, Paris, 1924, p. 515. <sup>3</sup> Virgil, *Aeneid* 6, 841. <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 8, 670.

<sup>5</sup> Horace, *Carmina* 2, 15, 11. <sup>6</sup> Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* 7, 27.

<sup>7</sup> Quintilian, *Inst. Or.* 12, 11, 23. <sup>8</sup> Cicero, *De Oratore* 3, 135.

<sup>9</sup> Cicero, *Disp. Tusc.* 4, 3. <sup>10</sup> Cicero, *Pro Plancio* 20.

<sup>11</sup> Plutarch 1, 2. <sup>12</sup> Livy, *Historiae* 34, 15.

<sup>13</sup> Cato, *De Re Rustica* 1, 1-4.

<sup>14</sup> Plutarch, 2, 2. (Translation by Bernadotte Perrin in the Loeb Classical Library). <sup>15</sup> Nepos, *Cato* 1.

<sup>16</sup> See Silius Italicus 7, 691-704; 10, 14. <sup>17</sup> Plutarch, 2, 3.

<sup>18</sup> Nepos, *Cato* 1. <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* <sup>20</sup> Plutarch 1, 6. <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* 1, 7.

<sup>22</sup> Laurand, *Manuel*, 514. <sup>23</sup> Plutarch, 3, 7.

<sup>24</sup> Boethius, *Cons. Phil.* 2, 7, 16. <sup>25</sup> Seneca, *De Benef.* 5, 7, 6.

<sup>26</sup> Plutarch, 4, 1. <sup>27</sup> Seneca, *Epp.* 86, 10-12.

### The American Classical League and Its Work

BY DOROTHY LATTA, *Director*

American Classical League Service Bureau

I am grateful for this opportunity of telling of the League's work in behalf of the classics and the teachers.

In 1917 Dean Andrew F. West, of Princeton University, called a conference on the value of the classics. The speakers were from many different vocations, all of national or international reputation. The statements of these speakers were incorporated in a volume entitled "The Value of the Classics." President M. Carey Thomas, of Bryn Mawr College, speaking before the New York Classical Club in 1918, asked for the combined efforts of teachers of the classics to combat the trend against all cultural studies. As a result a second classical conference was held in conjunction with the National Education Association meeting in Pittsburgh two months later, at which Dean West was empowered

to appoint a committee to effect a permanent organization, national in scope. In 1919 at the National Education Association, meeting in Milwaukee, the American Classical League was duly organized, and Dean West was elected its first president. The Council of the League at present consists of some thirty-seven members, many of whom are the elected representatives of other classical groups, regional or local.

The League has three chief aims. First, to gain desirable publicity for the classics and answer the criticisms which are made against the classics; second, to discover through research what content and methods will improve the teaching of the classics; third, through correspondence and publications to help teachers to meet the many problems of the classroom.

For the first purpose several pamphlets containing papers or talks of well-known laymen and educators on the value of the classics and a collection of statements from prominent people were printed and distributed. A few years ago, to bring the latter up to date, statements from bankers, labor leaders, educators, the clergy, and professional men on the value of the classics were printed in a four-page folder entitled "The Value of the Classics Today." Again, as in 1917, the cry has gone up that the humanities should be abolished in favor of the immediately practical. Again the League rose to meet this demand. In answer to the Educational Policies Commission of the National Education Association proposal that the teaching of Latin should be discarded for the duration of the war, a pamphlet entitled "Why Latin and Greek Should Not be Discontinued in Our Schools" was distributed in May, 1943, to all teachers on the mailing list of the League. To implement this first purpose committees have been formed at various times in the history of the League. At present the Committee on Public Relations is working to supply matter to the public press designed to interest readers assumed to be actually or potentially friendly.

Another project which the League is fostering is the Junior Classical League. Our main idea is to provide a national organization for students below the college grade who are interested in classical culture. The number of chapters active in 1942-1943 was 485, and the number of active members was slightly over 10,000.

The League has also sponsored the nation-wide bi-millennial celebrations of Vergil and Horace in 1930 and 1935. Plays, pageants, programs, articles, nation-wide tours of speakers, contests, banquets, and pilgrimages abroad resulted from the League's efforts.

Since the beginning of its existence the League has been cooperating with the Department of Secondary Education of the National Education Association. In addition, it has always held its annual meeting with the NEA. This meeting consists of two afternoon sessions with interested laymen speakers as well as educators and teachers. The League in cooperation with the National Federation of Modern Language Teachers also conducts a midwinter meeting in conjunction with the American Association of School Administrators of the NEA.

In the Field of Research the League conducted in 1921-1924 a national investigation of classical teaching under the sponsorship of the General Education Board. This nation-wide study was made possible through the devoted work of Dean West, Dr. Mason D. Gray, and Professor W. L. Carr, assisted by an advisory committee of fifteen members and by thousands of teachers and students over the country. The results of this investigation were incorporated in a volume called the "General Report of the Classical Investigation." As the first thorough, scientific investigation into a subject in the schools, its influence has been widely felt in changed curricula, syllabi, methods of teaching, and textbooks. It restated the objectives of the teaching of Latin in harmony with the newer educational aims. The League has sponsored research in recent years and will continue this vital work whenever possible.

For the third purpose mentioned above, namely, that of direct aid to teachers, the League established and has maintained for twenty years a Service Bureau for Classical Teachers. Frances A. Sabin, who had been helping the teachers of Wisconsin by correspondence and by a printed Bulletin from her post at the University of Wisconsin, was made Director of this Bureau in 1923. She ably fostered this undertaking until her retirement in 1936. All through its existence the Bureau has answered thousands of queries by letter. The accumulated experience of teachers has been made available in over 700 printed and mimeographed items, posters, charts, and over 300 pictures, each obtainable for a small sum. An extensive mail order business is conducted in these aids to teachers.

The League's offices and its Service Bureau have successively been housed at Princeton University, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York University, and Vanderbilt University. The quarters have a library, files of periodicals, and an extensive and valuable collection of clippings and original material sent in by teachers, ranging in subject from content and methods to projects and the value of the classics. There are also on display recent books from the publishers, maps, pictures, scrap books, charts, and models. These are available for use at the Bureau of teachers and students who can come to our quarters.

Through the first thirteen years of its existence the League provided in its \$1.00 membership a monthly periodical, eight issues during the school year, called Latin Notes. It was edited by Miss Sabin until her retirement. Since Latin Notes was a name brought by Miss Sabin from her leaflet originally published at the University of Wisconsin, at Miss Sabin's retirement the periodical's name was changed to The Classical Outlook, and Professor Lillian B. Lawler, of Hunter College, New York City, was elected its editor. The periodical provides short, interesting articles for the League's laymen and professional members on the various aspects of ancient literature and life, pedagogical articles, a column, 'Vox Magistri,' of devices and methods sent in by teachers, book notes on the new publications in our field, and news and announcements of interest to members.



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## Editorial

A recent volume by Professor Lane Cooper, entitled "Experiments in Education," contains papers, lists, and sketches of enduring value to anyone who is in earnest about his profession as an educator.<sup>1</sup>

The bulk of the fourteen pieces here offered deals, as might be expected, with English Literature: Courses in English, Old English, Middle English, Dante in English, Chaucer, and Wordsworth. Another group of papers is of more immediate interest to the classical teacher: A Book for Beginners in Greek, A Course in Translation of the Classics, and, above all, Our Plato (reprinted from THE CLASSICAL BULLETIN). Four other items take a broader sweep: The Place of the Library, A Course in General Reading, A Course in Principles of Literary Criticism, and A Course in the Method of Literary and Linguistic Scholarship. All this variety of interests is bound together by one dominant idea, which is deeply felt and trenchantly expressed in the opening paper that gave the volume its title.

We are pleased to note that the author, himself a finished scholar in the ancient classics, does not forget us classical teachers in a volume dedicated to "Education." And indeed, what use is there in our taking modern boys and girls back into the days of Greece and Rome unless we mean to *educate* them?

The whole volume strikes one as the author's farewell to the teaching profession. We can do no better, therefore, now that the distinguished scholar, educator, and humanist has retired from active service as a teacher, than treasure at least two exquisite passages from the opening paper, which seems specially addressed to the classical teacher:

The training you could get in the Academy of Plato was a healthy spot in a great desert; and the training you could get in the Lyceum, under Aristotle, Plato's favorite pupil, was another, a bright spot in human history. Again, the university that Plato founded, the Academy, was vigorous and bright enough to stay alive nine hundred years, till the emperor Justinian closed the schools of Athens in the year of our Lord

529, when Benedict founded another system which survived in the schools of the Middle Ages, survives today, and will survive the unmoral, unreligious 'humanism' of our time.

The following appeal is a frank and spirited indictment of the vagaries that now parade under the high-sounding name of Education:

Doctors, Masters, Scholars; Friends and Christians! We have talked about religion and its fellow, education. They are what your sons are fighting for, and dying for, in this purge of all the nations. If we let our universities and churches spoil, if we let our effort to destroy the enemy destroy or damage our religion or our education, what will there be left to fight for? If before the war our education was approximately what it should have been, let us preserve it; if it was not what it should have been, let us study, *study*, to improve it, not because of this war only or the one before it, but because of the eternal war of light on darkness.

Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls (Jer. 6.16).

<sup>1</sup> Published by Cornell University Press: Ithaca; 1943. Price \$2.50.

The January number of *The Historical Bulletin* contains a valuable bibliography of "Greek and Roman History," which lists fifty titles under five heads: General Ancient Histories; Histories of Greece or Rome; Source Collections; Works on Phases of Greek History; Works on Phases of Roman History. Copies of this bibliography may be obtained 'at a very reasonable price.' Address Richard L. Porter, S.J., St. Louis University High School; St. Louis 10, Missouri.

## Boethius, Roman and Christian

By EDWIN A. QUAIN, S.J.

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Even apart from the intrinsic merits of the literary monument that he left behind him, Boethius should be a figure of commanding interest to all who are interested in the impact of Christianity on the culture of ancient Greece and Rome. In him we possess a character that was a distillation of the mighty ferment that resulted from the union of these two forces. For in Boethius Christianity had triumphed and, at the same time, the best of ancient thought had informed a mind that was to become one of the strongest influences in developing the civilization that we call the Middle Ages.

Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius was born in Rome in A.D. 480. Scion of a noble Roman family, he was the son and grandson of Roman consuls, held that office himself in 510 and saw his two sons follow in his footsteps in 522. Left an orphan at an early age, he was reared by the eminent Symmachus, *antiqui Catonis novellus imitator*,<sup>1</sup> whose daughter Rusticiana he later married. His education was most thorough for he was *utraque lingua peritissimus orator*.<sup>2</sup> The legend that he studied in Athens is based on a false reading of a letter of Cassiodorus,<sup>3</sup> but he was a profound student of Greek philosophy. For years he held high office under Theodoric, the Gothic King who ruled the Empire of the West; but a charge of treason brought him to his death when he was accused of fomenting rebellion among the Senators. After some months in jail, he was executed at Calvenzano, near Pavia, at the age of forty-four.

His earliest intellectual interest seemed to lie in the *Quadrivium*, on which three works are extant. In the *Institutio Arithmetica*, *Institutio Musica*, and *Ars Geometrica*, he makes no pretense of originality but only of translating and adapting the works of Nicomachus, Euclid, Plato, and Ptolemy. His point of view is that of the philosopher rather than of calculator or musician. His search is for Wisdom. *Sapientia est earum rerum quae vere sunt cognitio atque integra comprehensio*.<sup>4</sup> The *essentiae quae vere sunt* are those which imply multitude and magnitude. In the former class he finds Arithmetic *quae per se est multitudo*, and Music *quae est multitudo ad aliquid*, that is, the result of harmonic proportion. Among the latter are Geometry, *immobilis magnitudinis notitia*, and Astronomy, *mobilis magnitudinis scientia*. Arithmetic is *cunctis prior*, not only because Number was the *exemplar* according to which God created all things, but also because Number is presupposed in the treatment of any of the others. He all but bows in awe before the spectacle of a Perfect Number, or one which is equal to the sum of all its factors.<sup>5</sup> Such numbers are 6, 28, 496, and 8128, all of which end in 6 or 8 (!) and are like virtues in that both are rare. For Boethius, there was a mystery in Mathematics of quite a different kind from that which haunts the days and nights of harried schoolboys.

His treatise on Music is mainly mathematical, and its study will not win one a chair with the Philharmonic. In fact, he has nothing but lofty disdain for mere musical practitioners, for clearly they indulge in nothing but bodily activity, fitting for a slave but hardly the task of an intelligent man. The composer is no more admirable since he is impelled *naturali quodam instinctu ad carmen*. Since both therefore *sunt totius speculationis expertes*, the only true musician is the Critic! He alone it is *cui adest facultas secundum speculationem rationemque . . . de modis et rhythmis deque generibus cantilenarum . . . iudicandi*.<sup>6</sup> The *Ars Geometrica* is less elaborate and consists of definitions of the various figures and angles and a list of the standard theorems of the Geometry of Euclid. Although these works may seem far-removed from the practical mathematical point of view of today, a mere list of the extant Mss. attests quite clearly the immense popularity they enjoyed in the Middle Ages.

Boethius had chosen as his life work the formidable task of translating all the works of Plato and Aristotle and of illustrating them with suitable commentaries, with a view to showing that they were in accord on most of the main points of philosophy.<sup>7</sup> One life, and that a very long one, would not have sufficed for so mighty a task, and the brief span allowed to Boethius permitted the completion of only a part of this great dream. His main interest and his greatest importance for the Middle Ages lay in this field of Dialectics. In systematic fashion he began with a translation and commentary on the *Isagoge* of Porphyry, and it is in this work that he let fall the seed that flowered so luxuriantly in the high Middle Ages; with admirable objectivity he summarizes the views of Plato and Aristotle on the question of Universals and then politely declines to settle it. As he said, *altissimum enim est negotium*.<sup>8</sup> A very deep business, indeed.

The literary form of this work renders a somewhat dry subject quite interesting. It is a dialogue which presumably took place between Boethius and Fabius at the former's Villa in *montibus Aureliae*. Their conversation took place during two very cold nights in winter while they discussed in great detail the nature of *genus, species, differentia, proprium, and accidens*.

In pursuance of his plan he successively published *In Categorias Aristotelis*, *In Librum Aristotelis de Interpretatione*, *Analytica Priora*, *Analytica Posteriora*, *Topica*, and *De Sophisticis Elenchis*.<sup>9</sup> This was all that he had time to accomplish of his great ambition. Had Boethius succeeded, in the sixth century, in bringing Plato and Aristotle to the West, the intellectual history of Europe might have been vastly different. As it was, the influence of these works can hardly be exaggerated; even at the high point of Scholasticism, those who knew the Logic of Aristotle got it from Boethius.<sup>10</sup>

With such intellectual interests it is not surprising that he should concern himself with the Trinitarian questions that were being so seriously agitated in his times,<sup>11</sup> and in his Theological Tractates he seeks to apply Aristotelian terminology to the data of Revelation. Four of these *Opuscula Sacra* are completely speculative, and he examines the possibility of applying the Categories to the Trinity; the nature of Absolute and Relative goods; the use of the Category of Relation when speaking of Father and Son, and in the last of these he attacks Eutyches and Nestorius. In the course of this work he elaborates his definition of Person, *Naturae rationalis individua substantia*, that has become classic in philosophy and theology since his times. His attitude in these works is most admirable and he tells us: *Haec si se recte et ex fide habent, ut me instruas peto; aut si aliqua re forte diversus es, diligentius intueri quae dicta sunt et fidem si poterit rationemque coniunge*.<sup>12</sup> Boethius had no illusions as to where the final truth lay; he tried humbly to use his knowledge to facilitate to some degree the human expression of the nature of the Divine.

The simplicity and sincerity of his faith becomes even clearer in his famous Fourth Tractate, called the *De Fide Catholica*. It is an extended creed. Formerly the authorship of this brief work was denied to Boethius, but a further study of the Mss. and the evidence of the *Anecdota Holderi, capita quaedam dogmatica*, have restored it to his name.<sup>13</sup>

His final work, written while in prison at Calvenzano, is the *Consolatio Philosophiae*, and it is this work that has won to him the hearts of all men who have suffered, for fourteen centuries. It is written in alternate prose and verse, the latter being a lyrical expression of the preceding prose section. While brooding over his unhappy lot and amusing himself with verses, he is visited by Lady Philosophy, who drives away the Muses and proceeds to the cure of his illness. By means of the *Remedia Leviora*, she brings him to a complete detachment from riches, honor, position, and all earthly goods, and shows him the way to the airy heights of the *Summum Bonum*. Then turning to her *Remedia Validiora*, she expounds Fate, Divine Providence, Finality, Divine Fore-Knowledge, and Free Will. She ends with the advice to "avoid evil, embrace virtue, and pray

humbly to God, in whose all-embracing sight you live."<sup>14</sup>

John of Salisbury noted with some regret that *liber ille Verbum non exprimat incarnatum*.<sup>15</sup> Later scholars have gone so far as to suggest that Boethius was not a Christian at all, since, "while awaiting the summons of death," he wrote a philosophical work. It should be said, however, that there is no real evidence that he was expecting the executioner to arrive at any moment; further, to remain a Christian it would hardly be necessary for a man to air his innermost thoughts of his relation to his God, even in the expectation of death. A man who has concerned himself with philosophy all his life might well pass the time of a tedious imprisonment in putting together what philosophy had to say to one in his plight. Despite the assiduous efforts of the searchers of his *Urquellen*, the Consolation remains "a perfect expression of the union of the Christian spirit with the classical tradition."<sup>16</sup>

Such is the literary heritage of Boethius to the Middle Ages. His praises were sung by his contemporaries, Ennodius and Cassiodorus; throughout the Middle Ages, the list of his enthusiastic admirers contains the name of almost every literary figure of importance. When translations of the Consolation became necessary, no less a figure than King Alfred turned it into Old English, Chaucer into Middle English, Notker Labeo into German, Jean de Meun into French, and even Queen Elizabeth into the English of her times.<sup>17</sup> Countless others there have been, but none perhaps would have given greater pleasure to Boethius than that made into Greek, by Maximus Planudes at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Truly, another circle of history had been turned.

Boethius thus made his contribution to at least four of the Seven Liberal Arts,—the educational curriculum of the Middle Ages. While much that he taught may be considered outmoded today, the spirit and tendency of his mind will not be lacking in power of inspiration for us. He lived in times of upheaval and strife; times like our own, when to the superficial view nothing appears to be of importance but the practical pursuits of the moment. It should give us pause when we are tempted to succumb before the rising tide of scorn for the things of the mind, for the truly human and perennial values. The shining light of his intellectual vision lighted for those who came after him the path of civilization and culture, which often, in this world's history, leads through ways that are shadowed and dim.

<sup>1</sup> H. Usener, *Anecdoton Holderi, Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte Roms in Ostgothischer Zeit* (Bonn, Carl Georgi, 1877), p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Cassiodorus, *Variae*, I, 45, (edit. Th. Mommsen, *MGH, Auct. Antiquiss.*, XII, Berlin, Weidmann, 1894), p. 40.

<sup>4</sup> *Institutio Arithmetica*, edit. G. Friedlein (Leipzig, Teubner, 1867), proemium, p. 7. <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* cap. xix, p. 39.

<sup>6</sup> *Institutio Musica*, edit. G. Friedlein (Leipzig, Teubner, 1867), I, cap. xxxiv, p. 233 sq.

<sup>7</sup> *De Interpretatione*, 2, 2, 3, edit. C. Meiser (Leipzig, Teubner, 1877), II, p. 79.

<sup>8</sup> *In Isagogen Porphyrii Commenta*, edit. S. Brandt, CSEL, 48 (Vienna, Hoelder, 1906), p. 159.

<sup>9</sup> M. Manitius, *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur im Mittelalter* (Munich, Beck, 1911), I, p. 29-32.

<sup>10</sup> M. Grabmann, *Die Geschichte der scholastischen Methode* (Freiburg, Herder, 1909-1911), 2 vols. *passim*.

<sup>11</sup> Viktor Schurr, C. Ss. R., *Die Trinitätslehre des Boethius im Lichte der "Skythischen Kontroversen"* (Paderborn, 1935).

<sup>12</sup> *The Theological Tractates and the Consolation*, E. K. Rand-H. F. Stewart, Loeb Edition (Cambridge, Harvard, 1936), p. 36.

<sup>13</sup> E. K. Rand, *The Founders of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Harvard, 1929), p. 156.

<sup>14</sup> *Cons. Phil.* V, pr. vi, 172 sq.

<sup>15</sup> John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, VII, 15.

<sup>16</sup> C. Dawson, *The Making of Europe* (Sheed & Ward, London, 1932), p. 65.

<sup>17</sup> H. R. Patch, *The Tradition of Boethius* (New York, Oxford, 1935).

## Lucretius, Vergil, Horace, and the Present

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Lucretius, Vergil, and Horace lived in a period very like our own. The Roman Republic had been jogging along comfortably enough until 133 B.C., when Tiberius Gracchus gave it a fatal blow by the unprecedented action of the people recalling a recalcitrant tribune and replacing him by one who saw eye to eye with him in a most drastic piece of agrarian legislation. It was the first successful challenge to the unwritten constitution of republican Rome, and the first of a series of changes and civil wars that ended only with the Battle of Actium in 31 B.C.

Lucretius, born about 98, was at the most impressionable period of a boy's life during the reign of terror and frightful massacres in 87, the last year of Marius, then consul for the seventh time. In the Battle of the Colline Gate, five years later, fifty thousand are said to have fallen in the streets of Rome. This was immediately followed by a series of judicial murders and the absolute dictatorship of Sulla, which ended with his abdication and death soon afterwards. The significance of this frightful period, extending through most of the adolescence of Lucretius, is well summarized by Cicero: "Such misfortunes befell the state after the death of Lucius Crassus that it seems to me the immortal gods did not snatch life from him, but bestowed death upon him as a boon. He did not see Italy ablaze with war, the senate exposed to the burning flames of popular disapproval, the most bitter flight of Gaius Marius, that most cruel massacre of everyone after his return."<sup>1</sup> The unexampled granting to Pompey of a *maius imperium* by the Gabinian Law of 67, the even more startling *maius imperium* granted by the Manilian Law in 66, the incredible First Triumvirate of 60, and the "bravado of Caesar's consulship"<sup>2</sup> in 59, must have convinced any thinking Roman that the Republic was very sick indeed.

The date of the composition of the *De Rerum Natura* is not known; but as it ends abruptly with verse 1286 of Book VI, it is reasonable to suppose that Lucretius was still at work in the last year of his life, approximately 55 B.C., when Vergil was a boy of fifteen and Horace was ten. "One may be sure," as Martha pertinently remarks,<sup>3</sup> "that Lucretius had been no indifferent spectator of the civil wars and that his soul had experienced all the melancholy of political despair." May we not go further and say that the *De Rerum Natura* is the product of its times as perhaps no other work in Roman literature? Lucretius certainly believed that the universe would ultimately perish, and the ending of



Book II from 1150 on suggests that he believed the last day might be near.

The purpose of this mighty poem is to explain the exact nature of the universe, that it was formed, and life appeared and evolved, in accordance with ascertainable natural laws, that the gods had nothing to do with creation, and that there is not the slightest trace of a divine purpose or the possibility of any divine intervention. Lucretius is especially anxious to destroy religion, which he thinks can do nothing but harm, and to remove the fear of death. In Book III he advances twenty-eight arguments to prove that the soul, like the body, must be mortal, and there cannot be any kind of life after death. Death is a dreamless sleep for all eternity, and hence there is nothing to fear after death. Even if one could live forever, there is nothing new under the sun. "Everything is always the same." "The old order is ever passing, thrust out by the new." "No man possesses life in freehold—all as tenants." "Is there anything horrible in that? Is there anything gloomy? Is it not more peaceful than sleep?" Hence, "Why not like a banqueter fed full of life withdraw with contentment and rest in peace?"

So far as the infinitesimal space of time we have to live is concerned, only reason can guide us. The whole duty of man is to inhabit "the serene sanctuaries of philosophy" and "to see that few things altogether are necessary for the bodily nature, only such in each case as take pain away."

When Caesar was murdered in 44 B.C., he had been an absolute monarch for six months. He had had himself proclaimed a god on earth and a priesthood established to maintain his worship. He had introduced the *Führerprinzip* and the conception of the *Uebermensch*. He had come to realize that the old republican form of government, which rested on the willingness of the governed to carry out the principles of an unwritten constitution and the *mos maiorum*, was hopeless in that period of lawlessness and general degeneracy. Accordingly, an absolutism resting on a kind of 'divine right of kings' seemed to him the only solution. It requires little imagination to grasp what this meant to staunch republicans and men like Cicero. In 45 B.C., on the occasion of the death of Cicero's daughter, Sulpicius wrote: "Why is it that you are so upset by a personal sorrow? Consider how we have been treated by fortune,—that those things have been torn from us which ought to be no less dear than children, country, honor, rank, every political distinction . . . How often you must have thought—and I have often been struck by the same idea—those have not fared worst who have been allowed to exchange life for a painless death . . . But it is a dreadful thing to lose one's children. It is indeed, unless it is worse to suffer and endure the present state of affairs!"<sup>4</sup>

During the following twelve years, when Vergil was writing his *Eclogues* and Horace his two books of satires, there ensued a veritable period of chaos when the end of the world predicted by Lucretius must have seemed to many to be at hand. One of the reasons which induced Vergil to write the *Eclogues* at the beginning of this agonizing time was, it seems to me, to furnish a literary retreat where mind and imagination

could find relief from the horrors of everyday life in the simple, happy life of the country. It is interesting to note in the First *Eclogue* Vergil's prophetic acceptance as the savior of mankind of Octavian, Caesar's grand-nephew and adopted son, later the Emperor Augustus, then but a youth of twenty-one. It was indeed a 'time for greatness,' and this extraordinary young man responded to that need. However one may interpret the mystery of the child in the "Messianic *Eclogue*," probably written toward the end of 41,<sup>5</sup> when things were at their blackest, it is surely a prophecy of the Golden Age, which was beginning to dawn during the last ten years of Vergil's life when he was at work on the *Aeneid*.

Vergil was at work on the *Georgics* between 37 and 30 B.C. He had been 'ordered' to write them by Maecenas as part of what we should call a program of post-war planning. The government was most anxious to stimulate Italian agriculture and to reverse the disastrous trek of the population from the country to the city.<sup>6</sup> But Vergil did far more than carry out his *haurd mollia iussa*. Besides producing one of the greatest poems in the world's literature, he set forth the ideal of an unified Italy—an ideal not realized until 1870. For him, "Rome was to reincarnate herself, and the Italo-Roman idea, realized and established, was to be the light and life of the world."<sup>7</sup>

Horace was much slower than Vergil in accepting the new order and to recognize in Octavian the savior of his time. He had fought on the republican side at Philippi in 42 B.C. "On his return to Rome in 41 he was quick to utter in the resolutely defiant verse of his Sixteenth Epode both his devotion to the lost cause and his despair of the present age."<sup>8</sup> He soon met Vergil and a fellow poet, Varius, and through their influence and friendship was admitted to the friendship of Maecenas in 39. About six years later he received his Sabine Farm which afforded him a competency for life, but did not become reconciled to the new regime until after 31 B.C. "It was Actium that won over Horace, Actium and his love for Vergil. Octavian became for him the savior of the state, appointed by high heaven to make atonement for the crime of civil war, to avenge the death of Caesar, and to execute vengeance for that Waterloo of the day, the defeat of the Roman arms by the Parthians in 53 B.C."<sup>9</sup>

The remaining years of Vergil's life, devoted to that glorification of Rome which reached its climax in the reign of Augustus, were a period of reconstruction during which men were given something to pin their hope to, but the future seemed none too certain. In 27 B.C. Octavian assumed the honorary title of *Augustus*. After laying down his extraordinary powers, he restored as much of the republican form of government as was possible, but the years from 23 to 18 were a critical period for the principate because the senate and its officers proved incompetent, and the people were not disposed to let Augustus resign as much of the government as he appeared eager to do.

His health, moreover, although he lived to be seventy-six, was never robust. He very nearly died in 23. The following year he lost his promising nephew, Marcellus, whom he had intended to succeed him. So the period

during which the *Aeneid* was being composed was still a critical one, but the poem contains no hint of this unless there be a suggestion of it in the short sentence: "Such a task it was to found the city Rome." Indeed, it was at such a time that the optimistic and prophetic poet who had been able to write the Messianic Eclogue in the troubled year 41 and the glowing message of the *Georgics* during the chaotic and expiring years of the republic, composed perhaps the greatest verses of the poem, "You shall remember, O Roman, to rule the nations by your imperial command; these shall be your arts, to impose law on peace, to spare the conquered, and to overthrow the proud." The empire envisaged by Vergil is an empire founded on justice, righteousness, law and order, religion and an ultimate peace . . . It is an Ideal Empire and not an autocracy. Aeneas, in the vow that he makes before his final combat with Turnus, assures Latins and Trojans alike that in the new confederated states he claims no regal power. "That is a reminder to Augustus that he has not come to destroy but to fulfill."<sup>10</sup>

Horace outlived Vergil by many years. When he died in 8 B.C., the new era was well established and the uncertainty of the twenties had passed. It is the first three books of *Odes* published in 23 which reflect that period.

We are living in one of the most tragic eras in human history. The world is changing rapidly before our eyes; and when the present ghastly conflict is ended, the new order is going to be very different from that which preceded it.

As students of the classics, we may well revert to the past for hope and inspiration, especially to the three Roman poets whose experiences are an image of our own. Horace, one of the most engaging literary personalities of all time, boldly sets forth a way of life, and one, too, in harmony with the ideals of Augustus. His six opening odes of the third book are an encomium on those pristine virtues which had made Rome great—simplicity, endurance, fidelity to one's trust, justice, steadfastness of purpose, courage, and, finally, religion and purity. The most human of men, he allows to pleasure a place in his system, but forbids extravagance by his emphasis on the Golden Mean and the *Nothing to Excess*. He discovered that happiness lies within the heart of each of us and rests on two fundamental principles: *carpe diem*, that is, pluck every moment as if it were a lovely flower, and extract every atom of beauty and sweetness out of it without worry about what may follow; and *nil admirari*, wonder at nothing, that is, always remain unruffled and never be upset or disturbed by anything which happens, good or bad. It was his mission to pass this way of life on to others, as it was the mission of Lucretius to endeavor to make existence endurable by explaining the true nature of the world in which we live. Lucretius's practical advice is, to be guided by reason, to strive only for the little we need, and such as may avert pain, and, above all, to inhabit like a Santayana "the philosophic heights from which we may calmly view men wandering every which way in their helpless quest for the road of life." Vergil, whose mighty sympathy for struggling humanity

forever endears him to us is, indeed, "majestic in his sadness at the doubtful fate of human kind," yet, on the positive side, he sees "universal nature moved by universal mind," and to his last day holds to his vision of a Golden Age to come when peace and justice shall prevail everywhere. "He is the poet and prophet of no mere League of Nations, but of a single world-commonwealth, and of the fulfillment of the divine purpose in an ordered and universal peace."<sup>11</sup> It is his faith in a better world, coupled with profound sympathy for the pain that men endure, and the *nil admirari* of Lucretius and Horace that must steady us, too, in this tragic era through which we are passing.

<sup>1</sup> *De Or.* III.28.

<sup>2</sup> J. Wight Duff, *A Literary History of Rome* (Scribner's: 1910), 279. <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* <sup>4</sup> *Fam.* V.2.

<sup>5</sup> See H. J. Rose, *The Eclogues of Vergil* (Sather Classical Lectures, XVI. University of California Press: Berkeley, 1942), 138; and A. Norden, *Die Geburt des Kindes* (Teubner: 1924), 4ff.

<sup>6</sup> See J. W. Mackail, *Vergil and His Meaning in the World Today* (Marshall Jones: Boston, 1922), 59 ff.

<sup>7</sup> E. K. Rand, *The Building of Eternal Rome* (Harvard U. Press: Cambridge, 1943), 62.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 112. <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* 61. <sup>11</sup> Mackail, *op. cit.*, 140.

### Verse for Second Vespers

#### FEAST OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS

(Translated for May and Marion)

All hail

To you, bruised buds of martyrdom,  
Whom Christ's intent assassin slew  
Upon the threshold of the dawn,  
As whiplash whirlwinds flail and strew  
The bloom of roses on a lawn.

You are

The Christ's first victim sacrifice  
Of fluffy lambkins 'neath the sword,  
Who frolic now in childhood joys  
About the altar of the Lord  
With palms and infant crowns—for toys.

I subjoin the Breviary original for purposes of comparison:

Salvete, flores martyrum,  
Quos lucis ipso in limine  
Christi insectator sustulit,  
Ceu turbo nascentes rosas.

Vos prima Christi victima,  
Grex immolatorum tener,  
Aram sub ipsam simplices  
Palma et coronis luditis.

Woodstock College

JOSEPH T. CLARK, S.J.

A welcome bit of news from the Oxford University Press (New York City) is the publication of *Thucydides: The History of the Peloponnesian War*, edited in translation by Sir R. W. Livingstone. "Thucydides wrote the story of the first democracy in history, and of the fortunes and fall of its empire; but his pages contain the modern world scene in miniature. Ancient Greece in twentieth century Europe, incapable of union, tearing itself to pieces in wars which it did not desire but could not avoid." We are glad to see this ancient masterpiece incorporated in *The World's Classics* (No. 494; \$0.95). Every college student should own a copy.



